

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01978 111622Z
ACTION EUR-12

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

GENEVA PLEASE PASS CONGRESSMAN BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (GILMAN, BENJAMIN A.) UR US
SUBJECT: PROPOSED CONGRESSIONAL TRAVEL

REF: (A) STATE 029856 (NOTAL), (B) MOSCOW 1864 (NOTAL),
(C) MOSCOW 1886 (NOTAL)

1. POLCOUNSELOR CALLED ON MFA USA DIVISION BILATERALS
COUNSELOR CHETVERIKOV FEB 10 TO DISCUSS PROPOSED
FEB 15-17 VISIT BY CONGRESSMAN GILMAN (NOW IN GENEVA)
AND STAFFER BREITENBERG.

2. CHETVERIKOV SAID THE SITUATION WAS UNCLEAR AND ASKED
IN WHAT CAPACITY DID GILMAN AND BREITENBERG PROPOSE TO
VISIT. DRAWING ON REF A POLCOUNSELOR SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH
THEY WERE MAKING ARRANGEMENTS THROUGH TRAVEL AGENCY,
DEPARTMENT CONSIDERED ALL FOREIGN TRAVEL BY CONGRESSMEN
TO BE OFFICIAL. CHETVERIKOV RESPONDED BY NOTING THAT
NO SOVIET ORGANIZATION HAD INVITED THEM.

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3. CHETVERIKOV REVIEWED POLCOUNSELOR'S FEB 8 LETTER TO
USA DIVISION DEPUTY CHIEF FEDOSEYEV SETTING FORTH
PURPOSES OF VISIT AND REQUESTING MFA ASSISTANCE IN
ARRANGING CALLS, AS WELL AS POLCOUNSELOR'S ADDITIONAL
ORAL COMMENT ON GILMAN'S REPORTED INTEREST IN LEARNING
VIEWS OF SOVIET OFFICIALS ON VOA. HE SAID MFA EXAMINES

SUCH PROPOSALS IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR IMPACT ON U.S.-SOVIET POLITICAL RELATIONS AND FRANKLY SPEAKING THIS PROPOSED VISIT WAS "NOT VERY ENCOURAGING". GILMAN WANTED TO DISCUSS CASE OF NASHPITZ --WHO IS IN PRISON--AND "RELATED MATTERS" AS WELL AS EMIGRATION. SOVIET AUTHORITIES CONSIDERED APPROACHES ON SUCH TOPICS TO BE TANTAMOUNT TO INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. SOVIET POSITION ON VOA AND OTHER FOREIGN BROADCASTS WAS SO WELL KNOWN, SAID CHETVERIKOV, THAT GILMAN MUST BE A COURAGEOUS MAN TO EVEN BROACH THE TOPIC. IN ANY EVENT, MFA WOULD GO NO FURTHER THAN INFORM OTHER SOVIET AGENCIES OF GILMAN'S REQUESTS ON THESE ITEMS.

4. NOTING GILMAN'S EXPERIENCE ON HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND FACT THAT HE WAS FIRST CONGRESSMAN TO EXPRESS INTEREST IN VISITING USSR SINCE NEW ADMINISTRATION, POLCOUNSELOR ASKED WHETHER MFA HAD REACHED DECISION ON VISAS FOR GILMAN AND BREITENBERG. CHETVERIKOV SAID HE WAS UNAWARE THAT ANY VISA APPLICATION HAD IN FACT BEEN SUBMITTED. IN ANY EVENT, WE SHOULD NOT JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS; CASE WAS UNDER STUDY. HE REMARKED THAT TALKS WITH MEMBERS OF SUPREME SOVIET CONCERNED WITH FOREIGN RELATIONS "MIGHT BE PERHAPS A GOOD REASON FOR SUCH A VISIT." HE THEN REFERRED TO LANGUAGE IN OUR FEB 8 LETTER WHICH STATED VISITORS' DESIRE TO MEET APPROPRIATE SOVIET OFFICIAL "TO DISCUSS DELIVERY OF MAIL IN THE USSR" AND ASKED WHAT THAT MEANT. IN VIEW OF CHETVERIKOV'S EARLIER NEGATIVE REMARKS, POLCOUNSELOR ANSWERED IN GENERALITIES, CALLING ATTENTION TO VISITOR'S MEMBERSHIP LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN POST OFFICE COMMITTEE AND SPECULATING THAT VISITORS MIGHT WANT TO LEARN ABOUT OVERALL OPERATION OF SOVIET POSTAL SYSTEM. CHETVERIKOV THEN STATED THAT DEPENDING ON SPECIFICS SOMETHING MIGHT BE ARRANGED ON THAT ITEM.

5. COMMENT. CHETVERIKOV'S MESSAGE SEEMS CLEAR; A TRIP TO DISCUSS FOREIGN AFFAIRS INCLUDING U.S.-SOVIET BILATERALS MAY BE POSSIBLE BUT MFA IS IN NO MOOD TO ASSIST IN APPOINTMENTS RELATING TO IMPRISONED NASHPITZ (WHO NOT CARRIED IN OUR RECORDS), PLIGHT OF SOVIET JEWRY, OR RELATED MATTERS SUCH AS THEIR MAIL PROBLEMS. APPOINTMENTS TO SOUND OUT SOVIET VIEWS ON VOA SEEM DUBIOUS AT BEST. THOUGH HE DID NOT SAY SO, CHETVERIKOV'S REMARKS ALSO SEEMED TO HINT THAT IF CONGRESSMAN GILMAN AND BREITENBERG REALLY WANT TO MAKE THIS TRIP, THEY WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO "CLARIFY" THEIR PURPOSE QUICKLY IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO SATISFY MFA THAT THE "OBJECTIONABLE" ITEMS HAVE BEEN DROPPED FROM THE PROPOSED APPOINTMENT CALENDER.

TOON

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Sent Date: 11-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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